

# JON BON JOVI

HOW A KID FROM NEW JERSEY BECAME A  
**ROCK 'N' ROLL LEGEND**



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ROCK 'N' ROLL LEGEND













## WHY WE LOVE BON JOVI

His small-town-boy-makes-good story is one that anyone can applaud and admire.

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Becoming a rock star was Jon Bon Jovi's calling. He knew he'd have to work to get there.

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## INTRODUCTION

# WHY WE LOVE JON BON JOVI

From his early years as an unbelievably ambitious teen singer prowling the clubs of Asbury Park, New Jersey, where he jammed with the likes of Bruce Springsteen while still in high school, to his ascent into global rock superstardom, Jon Bon Jovi embodies the spirit of the rock ‘n’ roll American Dream.

Jon grew up in the humble working-class suburb of Sayreville, New Jersey. He wasn’t born to a rich or influential family—just one that supported the belief that anything was possible, even if things didn’t always go your way.

Jon translated that belief into his music, which allowed him to connect with people in a sincere and honest way. Almost everyone, no matter where they are in life, has lived their own variation of Tommy and Gina’s struggle in “Livin’ on a Prayer.” That song transcended its original theme to become a message of hope—a message so strong that 10 days after the 9/11 terror attacks, Jon performed “Livin’ on a Prayer” on *America: A Tribute to Heroes*, a telethon that raised more than \$200 million for the United Way’s September 11th Fund.

As we’ve watched Jon’s career unfold over the decades, we’ve seen him continue to evolve, mature

and aim higher and higher—always trying to find the next level up for what he might be able to achieve. “Anytime that you think you’ve reached the top of the mountain, the truth of the matter is, you’ve just reached another mountain,” Jon said on an episode of Oprah Winfrey’s *Master Class*. “When I heard ‘Runaway’ on the radio, I thought I made it. When I got a record deal, I thought I made it. When we had *Slippery When Wet*, I thought we made it. When we played the first time at an arena and you headlined, you thought you made it. Each step along the way is just a life’s lesson in humility, and it gives you ammunition to go on and be excited about the next day.”

Jon Bon Jovi is a rarity—not only in music, but in any walk of life: He’s a person who has achieved success without letting success corrupt his values or how he chooses to engage with the world. Married to his high-school sweetheart for more than three decades, committed to family and community more than he is to fame and fortune, and always striving to be the best version of himself that he can possibly be—his is a small-town-boy-makes-good story that anyone can applaud and admire.

Jon Bon Jovi performs in concert with his band during a stop on their *Lost Highway* tour at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California, on April 9, 2008.













Bon Jovi members David Bryan, Richie Sambora, Jon Bon Jovi, Tico Torres and Alec John Such at the Monsters of Rock festival in England on Aug. 22, 1987.









Clockwise from top left: Bon Jovi performs in Tokyo, Japan, in 1984; the band plays the city again in 1985; Jon with his 1958 Corvette in New Jersey in 1988.









Jon and Sambora record in Jon's home studio in New Jersey in 1987. That same year, the pair launched a publishing company called New Jersey Underground Music, Inc.





Clockwise: Jon and wife Dorothea Hurley in 1998; Jon and Sambora prepare to shoot a video for the song "Real Life" in 1997; Bon Jovi in New York City in 2016.











Howard Stern inducts Bon Jovi  
during the 33rd Annual Rock &  
Roll Hall of Fame Induction  
Ceremony in Cleveland on  
April 14, 2018.





A black and white photograph of the four members of the band Bon Jovi. On the left, Jon Bon Jovi is smiling, wearing glasses and a light-colored shirt. To his right, another band member is partially visible. On the far right, a third member wearing a flat cap looks towards the camera. In the bottom right corner, a fourth member with glasses and a dark shirt is smiling. A large black diamond shape is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text.

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BON • JOVI

# NEW JERSEY DREAMS

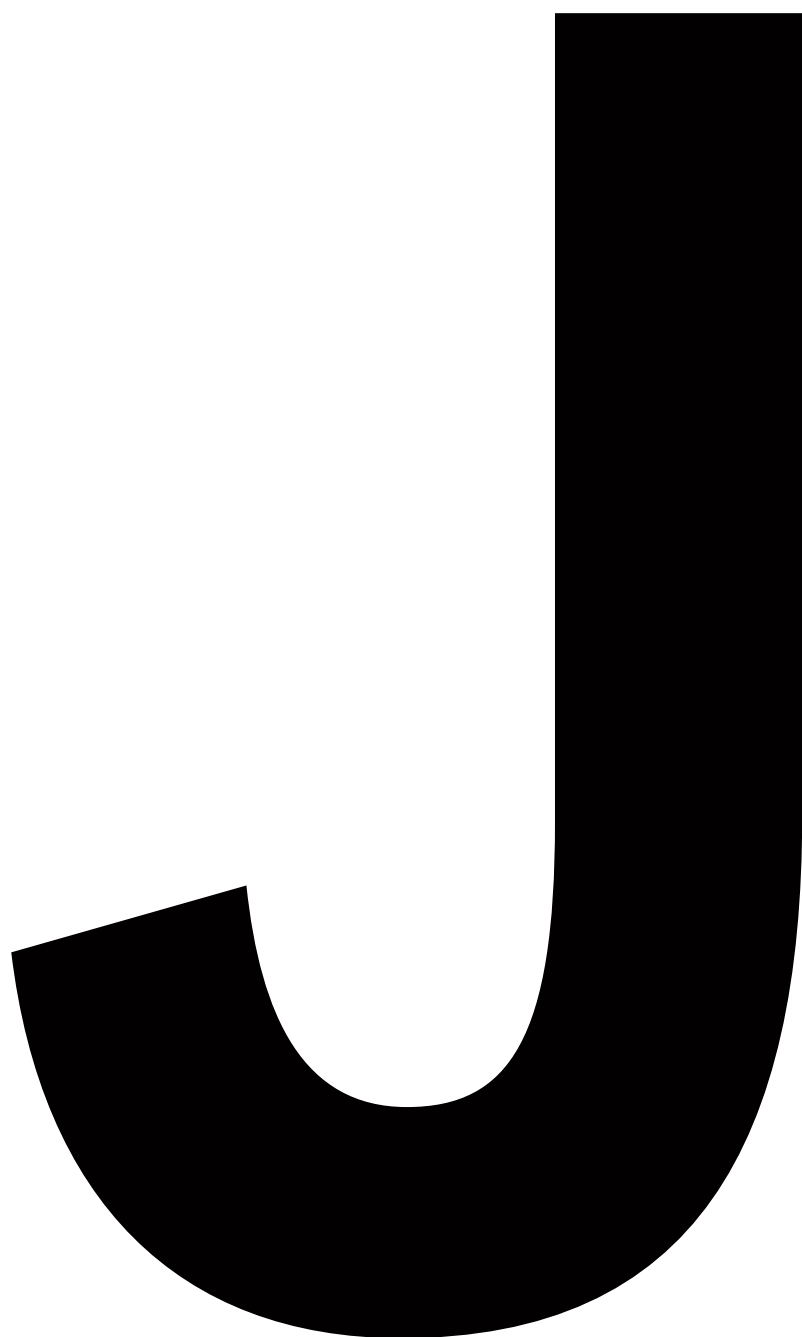
Jon Bon Jovi knew from an early age that he wanted to be a rock star—and that he'd have to put in the work to make it happen.





A young John Bongiovi, still in high school at the time, with his Atlantic City Expressway bandmates in New Jersey in the late 1970s.





Jon Bon Jovi entered the world as John Francis Bongiovi Jr. on March 2, 1962, in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. The coastal city is less than 30 miles from Manhattan—close enough to be considered part of the New York metro area—but far enough away that making your name in the Big Apple, or perhaps even becoming famous in places beyond, seemed like a tough dream to fulfill.

From a very early age, Jon Bon Jovi dared to hold on to that dream. And by the time he was in high school, he firmly believed that the way he was going to make his wishes come true was to become a rock ‘n’ roll superstar.

There were some real musical models for success for a kid like Jon growing up. The original “nobody from Jersey” who became a global singing sensation was Hoboken’s own Frank Sinatra. Jon was too young to have witnessed Sinatra in his early days—the era just before there was such a thing as rock ‘n’ roll when Frankie made all the bobby soxers swoon

like rockers would soon be doing in the ‘50s and ‘60s. Jon admired Sinatra nonetheless. There was even a story that the Bongiovi family was related to the Sinatras—a tall tale that Jon dismissed once and for all in 2016.

But the performers Jon *really* admired as a teen were so close to his house he could actually meet them. The two biggest names from that collection of Jersey-bred musical talent were “Southside” Johnny Lyon born in Neptune and raised in Ocean Grove and Bruce Springsteen, born in Long Branch and raised in Freehold. “They made records in my backyard,” Jon would later explain to an interviewer. “It gave you the feeling that the impossible was possible.”

Jon was encouraged to pursue “the impossible” by his parents, Carol Sharkey and John Francis Bongiovi Sr. They first met in the Marines and moved to John Sr.’s home state of New Jersey after they got married. There, they raised Jon and his two younger brothers, Anthony and Matthew, in Sayreville, a working-class town in Middlesex County.

Jon’s grandfather was a plumber—a fine and honest profession that just wasn’t sexy enough for his son, a young man pursuing his dreams in John F. Kennedy’s Camelot-era America. John Sr. wanted his life to be more glamorous than gritty. The same was true of his young wife, Carol. This yearning inspired John Sr. to pursue a career as a hair stylist and his wife, for a time, to work as a waitress at the Playboy Club in midtown Manhattan.

The couple wanted their children to believe that anything was possible, too, and told them as much before they were even born. When Carol was pregnant with Jon, she spoke to him in the womb: “You’re going to have a mom that’s behind you 210 percent, and you’re going to be the biggest star that ever lived.”

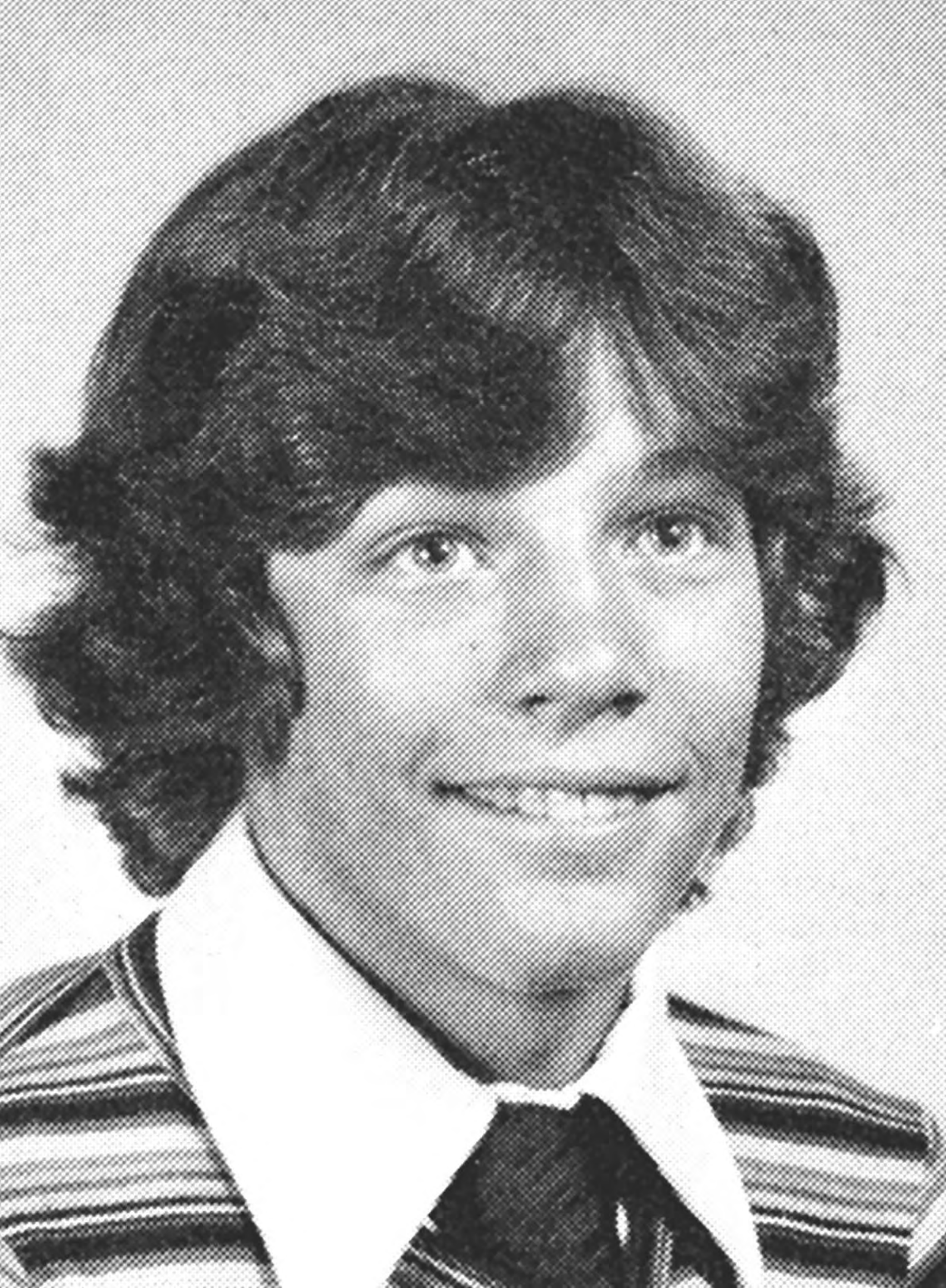
When Jon was a toddler, she stood with him in front of a big mirror and together they would sing along to Marilyn Monroe and Gene Autry songs. When Jon was 7, she brought home his first acoustic, along with a copy of a record called *Learn to Play Guitar*.

Jon started guitar lessons with a local teacher, but the experience was not inspiring. The teacher’s pipe smoke permeated the room, which was the size of a closet, and he’d be half asleep as he taught Jon tedious scales. When he got home, he threw his guitar down the stairs.

The guitar was relegated to the basement and Jon spent his time playing football and baseball and riding his dirt bike. That was until Jon was

By the time Jon Bon Jovi (then John Bongiovi) reached high school, he firmly believed that he was going to become a rock ‘n’ roll superstar. His parents wholeheartedly supported him pursuing that dream.







in his early teens, when a guitarist named Al Parinello moved in across the street. Parinello was a professional musician who played in lounge clubs and weddings along the Jersey Shore. He started giving guitar lessons to Jon, teaching him to play songs—rock songs—rather than practicing scales.

Parinello's first assignment for Jon: learn to play the Animals' version of "House of the Rising Sun." Jon didn't give the task much effort, and then half-assed it again when they worked on Thin Lizzy's "The Boys Are Back in Town." Angered, Parinello started the third lesson by making it Jon's last: "Don't waste my time, man," he said. "Just get out of here, leave."

It was a pivotal moment for Jon. He realized that if he really did want to become someone famous and successful, he at least had to try. Jon changed from being a slacker who barely touched his axe to becoming a kid so enamored with the guitar that he fell asleep with the instrument in his hands.

Parinello passed away in 1995. To honor his memory, Jon carved "AP 95" into the upper bout of his black Takamine EF341SC, which he purchased the year before Parinello's death. It's a guitar Jon still carries with him on tour, a constant reminder to practice every day.

When young Jon told his parents he wanted to be a rock star, his dad said, "Go for it!" His mom then chimed in, "Be the Perry Como of rock 'n' roll, and I'm behind you too."

In 1974, Jon played guitar and piano with his first band, Raze, at local talent shows. They did not achieve any success, but it was a start. In high school, first at St. Joseph in Metuchen, and then Sayreville

**"THEY MADE RECORDS  
IN MY BACKYARD. IT  
GAVE YOU THE FEELING  
THAT THE IMPOSSIBLE  
WAS POSSIBLE."**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes pose outside the Stone Pony club in Asbury Park, New Jersey, in June 1976. Jon Bon Jovi was encouraged by the Jersey-bred band's success.











War Memorial High in Parlin for junior and senior year, Jon was practicing to be a rock star more than he was spending time on schoolwork.

He had flowing long hair, perfectly styled thanks to his dad. And he wore sunglasses to school every day, both to look cool and to hide his sleep-deprived eyes. “Studying” meant listening to a lot of Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith, two bands whose posters hung on the walls of his room. By the time he was 16, his idea of “homework” meant venturing to nearby Asbury Park to play (and hang out) at clubs.

Jon’s partner was keyboardist David Bryan (Rashbaum), a student from J.P. Stevens High

School in nearby Edison, New Jersey. Together they founded a 10-piece band called Atlantic City Expressway that covered the music of Bruce Springsteen, the Animals, Thin Lizzy, and Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes.

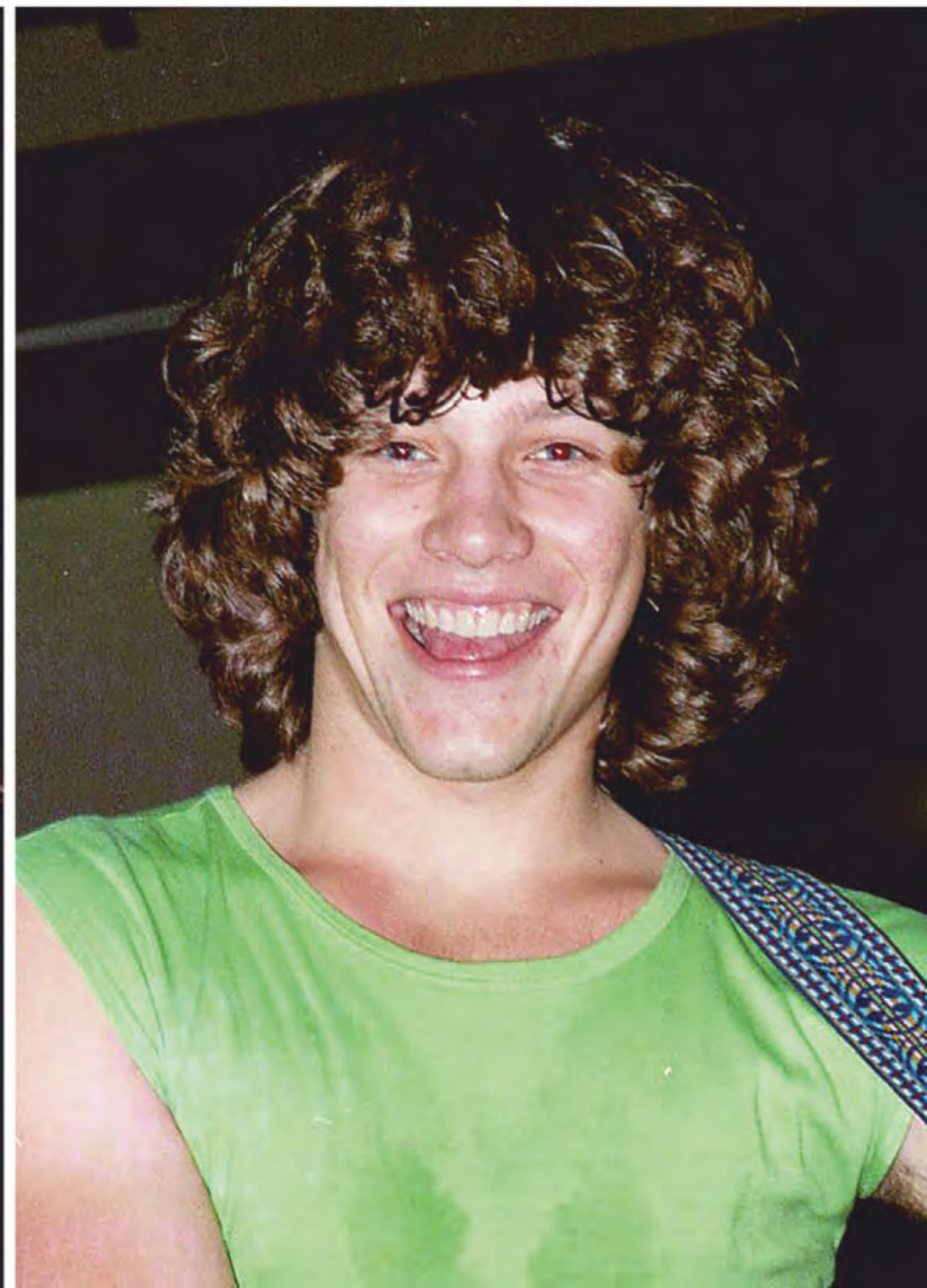
Springsteen and the E Street Band had put Asbury on the musical map by name with his 1973 debut, *Greetings From Asbury Park, N.J.* and then, in 1975, with the monster success of *Born To Run*, which hit No. 3 on the Billboard 200 albums chart. With Atlantic City Expressway, an underage Jon played shows in Asbury clubs until 3 a.m. and was at school by 8. During class, all he thought about

**“YOU’RE GOING TO HAVE A MOM THAT’S BEHIND YOU 210 PERCENT, AND YOU’RE GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST STAR THAT EVER LIVED.”**

**—Carol Bongiovi**

Above: After his mentor Al Parinello died in 1995, Jon Bon Jovi carved “AP 95” into the upper bout of his black Takamine EF341SC to honor Parinello’s memory and to remind himself to practice every day. Right: The singer performs with the Atlantic City Expressway.







SOLO







was getting back to the Asbury Park scene. The gigs were plentiful—musicians could find work even on a Monday night. Jon’s childhood friend Peter Mantas managed Atlantic City Expressway at the time and remarked, “Asbury Park holds a special place in my heart and Jon’s for sure because it was our Disneyland.”

L.A.’s Sunset Strip had venues like Gazzari’s and the Whisky a Go Go, which gave birth to hard rock and metal bands like Van Halen and Mötley Crüe. Asbury Park had the Stone Pony and the Fast Lane, places where local acts could run into national ones and maybe be discovered. Joan Jett, U2 and the Ramones all played the Fast Lane. And Atlantic City Expressway, a sprawling collection of kids fronted by high schooler John Bongiovi, was almost the club’s house band. (They played the Pony, too, until the bass player got them banned for using a fake I.D.)

Playing at the Fast Lane was always fun, but it was not always glamorous. For two years in a row, they played Sundays at the club, and it wasn’t uncommon for fewer than 20 people to show up to see them play. It was impossible not to notice, too, because the

**“ASBURY PARK HOLDS A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART AND JON’S FOR SURE BECAUSE IT WAS OUR DISNEYLAND.”**

**—Peter Mantas**

room could hold 700.

To Jon, it didn’t matter how many people were in attendance. He never slacked off, never stopped wiggling his butt and never failed to flash his already killer smile. This was Jon Bon Jovi’s very own school of rock, and his main goal was to graduate at the top of the class.

Left: The Atlantic City Expressway regularly played gigs in Asbury Park clubs including the Stone Pony and the Fast Lane. Above: The Stone Pony, pictured here in 2020, also played a role in launching the career of New Jersey music icon Bruce Springsteen.





2  
BON + JOVI

# THE KID HAS HORNS

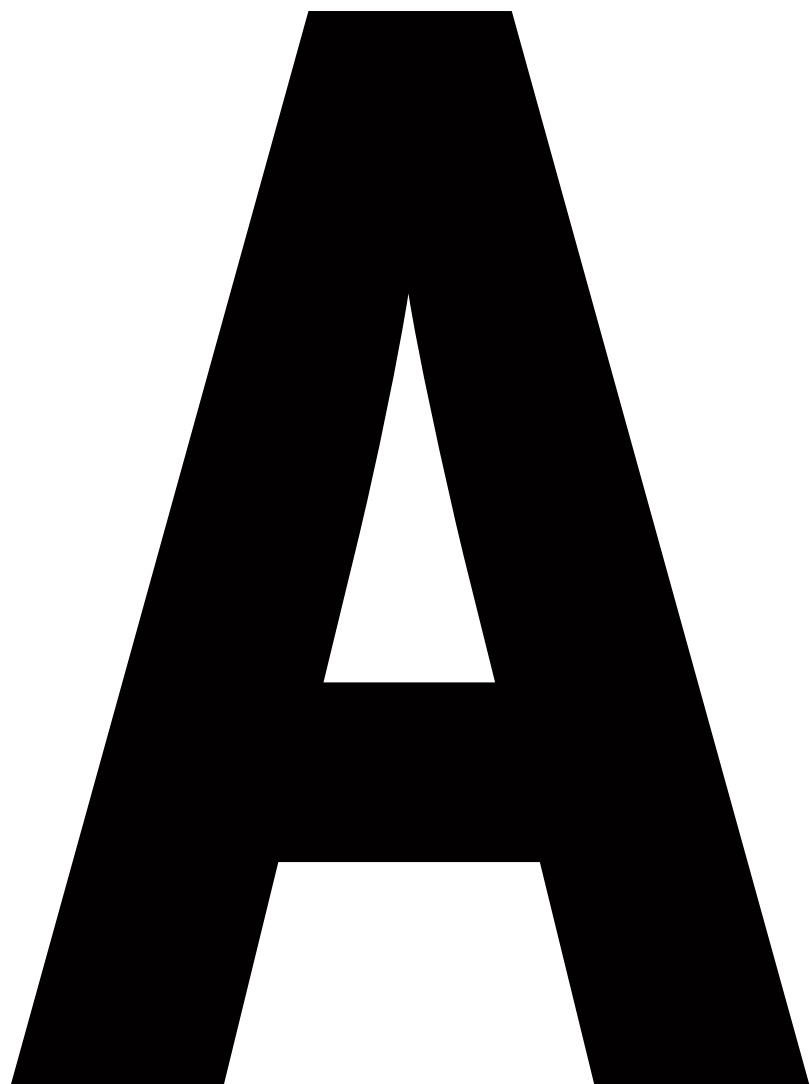
Jon Bon Jovi's  
star ambitions lead  
him to leave the  
cover bands behind  
and start  
developing his own  
original music.



Jon performs with his band the Rest. Conversations with mentors including Bruce Springsteen encouraged the ambitious young musician to move on from cover bands.







Asbury Park, New Jersey, was founded in 1871 by a New York City brush manufacturer named James A. Bradley. Looking for an escape from the likely toxic environment of his factory, Bradley was drawn to the soothing sea air of the Atlantic Ocean and the possibility of developing his own Utopian community close to the urban jungle where he had made his fortune.

One of the first things Bradley installed in Asbury, right up there with the boardwalk, was an orchestra pavilion so that music could accompany the natural rhythms of the waves. Popular musical acts were attracted to Asbury almost from the start. There was the pavilion, the proximity to both New York City and Philadelphia, and—probably most attractive of all—lots of wealthy people roaming around the one-square-mile city in search of entertainment.

But by the mid 1970s, things had changed in Asbury. A horrible race riot in 1970 was a turning point, driving many residents to neighboring cities and towns. And summer tourists, the lifeblood of Asbury's rise to prominence, took their family vacations elsewhere as theme parks and resorts started popping up around the country.

The one population that never abandoned the self-proclaimed “City by the Sea” was musicians. They practically took over, living in now-affordable houses and apartments, becoming regulars at the many bars and clubs, and enjoying all the natural benefits that came with the city's location. Once Southside Johnny and Bruce Springsteen landed record deals, even more musicians moved in, looking for their own big break. There was always the hope that if you hung around in Asbury and had some talent, you might be able to punch your own ticket to fame and fortune.

Southside Johnny and Springsteen were still there, too. Despite national fame—critic Jon Landau famously wrote “I saw rock and roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen” in 1974—Southside and Springsteen could be found in Asbury on a regular basis. They would casually stroll the boardwalk by day, sometimes stopping for a burger or a game of pinball. At night, they'd go to listen to their friends play at the Fast Lane, the Stone Pony, maybe Giulio's South—and, often, they'd join them unannounced if they heard a song they liked. After the last number, a chant would replace the music: “To the Jeff... Jeff... Jeff.” This was the rally cry that meant the party



New York City brush manufacturer James A. Bradley founded Asbury Park in 1871, and its many attractions made it a popular resort town. But in July 1970, a race riot caused by a lack of jobs and poor living conditions drove many people away.





was moving to the southeast corner of Fourth and Kingsley, otherwise known as the Jefferson Hotel, where the owner would keep the bar open after hours just so the bands could hang out and relax.

Still only a teenager, Jon Bon Jovi was part of that scene.

“Bruce and anyone else in that band, or that clique that was down there, was very, very, very supportive of myself and groups that I played in,” Jon said in a 1987 interview. “Bruce used to come down a lot, and Southside Johnny, and Steve Van

**“I’D SEE THEM ALL  
THROUGH ALL THE YEARS  
OF PLAYING THE CLUBS. I  
WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND  
I’D PLAY WITH THOSE GUYS.”**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

Zandt, and all of those guys. I’d see them all through all the years of playing the clubs. I was in high school and I’d play with those guys.”

Springsteen, in particular, was a monumental figure in Jon’s formative years. Jon spent practically all of his money on Springsteen bootlegs and thoroughly immersed himself in the deep cuts.

One night in January 1980, Springsteen came to the Fast Lane to check out Atlantic City Expressway—the Jersey Shore cover band fronted by Jon. When the opening harmonica intro of “The Promised Land” sounded, Springsteen came onstage and shared the mic with a beaming Jon. During the set, Springsteen’s ears perked again when he heard Jon covering “Action in the Street,” which Springsteen performed on tour but hadn’t recorded in the studio. Jon had picked up the song from one of the bootlegs. At one point, Springsteen even called Jon to let him know that he and the band had recorded one of Jon’s original songs with the legendary Gary U.S. Bonds. That song never made it to an album, but just hearing about it was a huge deal for a then 17-year-old Jon.

Atlantic City Expressway gave Jon local fame. People were talking about the good-looking kid with the great hair fronting a huge combo—a band that

A view of Asbury Park, New Jersey, in 1978. Southside Johnny and Bruce Springsteen were in Asbury regularly, strolling the boardwalk during the day and going to music venues like the Fast Lane and the Stone Pony to listen to their friends play at night.







even had a horn section, just like Southside Johnny. The life was terrific, but it also wasn't enough for Jon and his ambitions.

Maybe it was a realization he had on his own, or maybe it was brought up over beers with his musical mentors at the Jeff, but Jon increasingly believed that fronting a Jersey Shore cover band was not going to make him famous. With some appreciated advice from Springsteen, Jon focused on developing his own material. This meant working to become a better songwriter, a painful journey for any artist because it starts by being a pretty bad songwriter.

Jon closed the chapter on Atlantic City Expressway. Two other bands followed: the Rest, and John Bongiovi and the Wild Ones. Playing only to rats, Jon rehearsed in the freezing cold basement of the Fast Lane. He lived on grilled cheese sandwiches, sold for just a dollar at Asbury Lanes, a bowling alley.

"You know, it was very hard to keep an original band together in the early '80s because cover bands in New Jersey and New York and Long Island were

Clockwise from left: Bruce Springsteen joins Jon and the Atlantic City Expressway onstage at the Fast Lane in 1980; Springsteen sings "The Promised Land" with the band; Jon with Steven Van Zandt.





making money,” Jon later confessed to NPR. “But playing your own stuff, you’d be lucky if you could split \$100.”

In the summer of 1980, Jon went “on tour,” driving around the northeast with his bandmates in a station wagon loaded with gear. By now Jon was a seasoned live performer, but he and his various bands could not get a record label to show interest. Without a record deal, it was going to be hard to keep going for very long.

In search of some stable income for his son, John Sr. reached out to one of his cousins—Tony Bongiovi. Cousin Tony was older than Jon, more a contemporary of his father. But Cousin Tony was, legitimately, in the record business. Along with partner Bob Walters, Tony Bongiovi had built the Power Station, a full-fledged recording studio in Manhattan. Tony had seen Jon play before and noted that while his band stunk, Jon was pretty good. Tony offered to extend a helping hand: He gave Jon a job as a production assistant at the Power Station. This entailed doing odds and ends like fetching coffee, running errands and sweeping floors. The job was

**“PLAYING YOUR OWN STUFF, YOU’D BE LUCKY IF YOU COULD SPLIT \$100.”**

—Jon Bon Jovi

not particularly sexy, and in the beginning, Jon moaned to his brother Anthony about how much it sucked. But being at the Power Station allowed him to rub elbows with industry insiders. David Bowie, the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan came through the studio. When Steven Tyler was there to work on an Aerosmith record he allowed Jon to stay and watch him sing at 3 a.m.

Tony even arranged for Jon to appear on his first professional record—a record that would be sold in stores and very likely might become a hit. The

After Atlantic City Expressway, Jon joined up with a band called the Rest (below), followed by John Bongiovi and the Wild Ones. He was focused on developing his own material.











SOLO





## “IT WAS VERY HARD TO KEEP AN ORIGINAL BAND TOGETHER IN THE EARLY '80S BECAUSE COVER BANDS ... WERE MAKING MONEY.”

—Jon Bon Jovi

gig came when Tony’s production partner, Meco Monardo, was at the Power Station recording the novelty children’s release *Christmas in the Stars: Star Wars Christmas Album*. Accompanied by a choir of kids, Tony recommended Jon as the lead voice for the track “R2-D2 We Wish You a Merry Christmas.”

This wasn’t exactly the kind of song Jon wanted to be known for. But Tony convinced him the initial exposure might start his career rolling. Unfortunately, RSO Records, the album’s label, went out of business on the evening of the album’s release. This meant that only the original 150,000 copies went to press, which, while not insignificant for an aspiring musician, was far below the numbers needed to give Jon fame or fortune. Jon made very little money for the Star Wars gig, then returned to sweeping the floors.

But there was another perk to working for Cousin Tony, besides getting coffee for some of his rock

idols. When the studio wasn’t being used, Jon was allowed to use the facility to record demos with whatever combination of players he could convince to join him free of charge. Jon made full use of this opportunity, and through repetition, practice and the chemistry of being joined by actual professional session players, Jon started to produce demos that showed promise.

One of his Power Station demos was a re-recording of a song that Jon wrote in 1981 when he was with the Wild Ones. It was a song about a rebellious teenage girl, nothing too original, but the intro had an infectious keyboard hook. Recorded at the Power Station, it sounded better than the original version.

The song was called “Runaway.” And once it was recorded and pressed as a demo at the Power Station, it was about to make all of Jon Bon Jovi’s dreams come true.

When the Power Station recording studio wasn’t booked, Jon was allowed to use the facility to record his own demos. He made full use of the opportunity and, backed by professional session players, started to produce demos that showed promise.





3  
BON • JOVI

# RUNAWAY

By 1983, Jon  
had professional  
demos to shop  
around. Now he  
just needed  
someone to give  
him his big break.

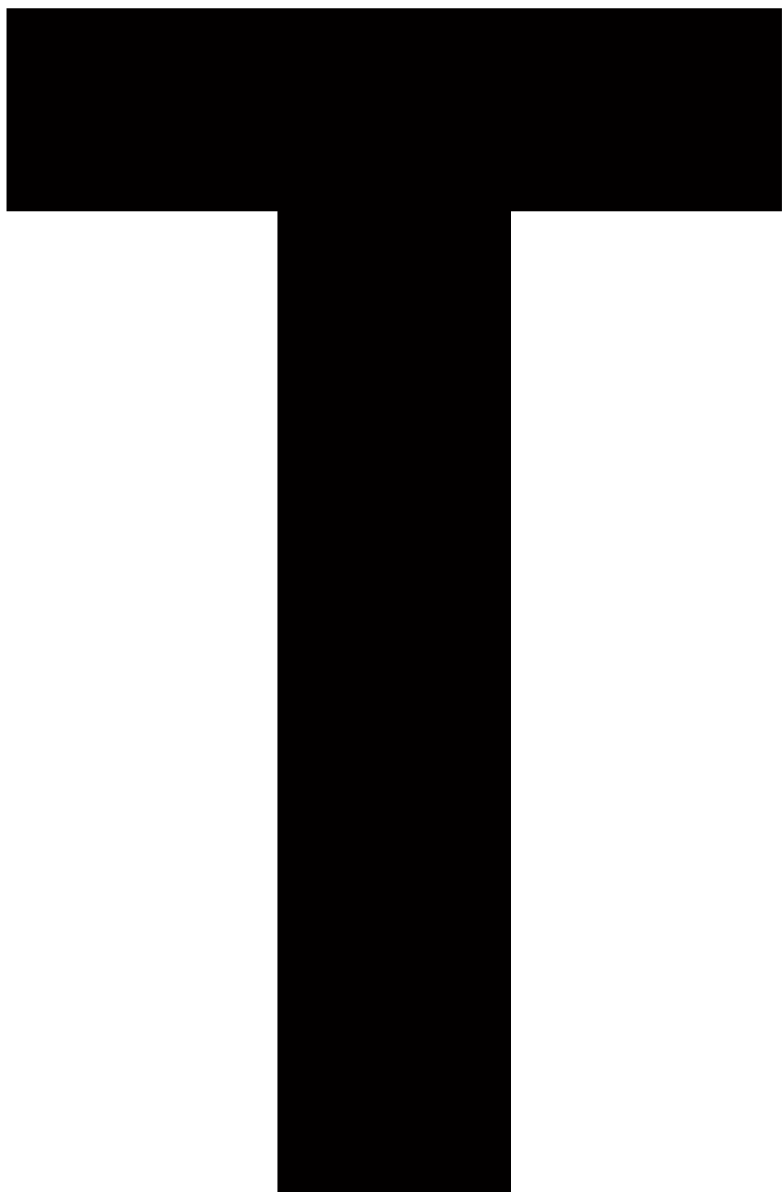
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Jon Bon Jovi poses for a portrait in New Jersey in 1984, the year his band Bon Jovi's debut album was released.





To music fans, a hit record by an unknown artist can appear to materialize out of nowhere like a bolt of lightning that jolts the airwaves. In reality, many of these songs endure a painful process of creation, revision and virtual nonexistence before they are ultimately discovered by the mainstream.

The origin story of “Runaway,” the song that put Jon Bon Jovi on the musical map, dates back to his pre-fame days in Asbury Park. There, a local songwriter named George Karak was playing at the Fast Lane with his band, George Karak and the Sweethearts, opening for Mink DeVille. Jon was at that show and, after the set, he approached Karak and asked if he wanted to write some songs together. The two developed a working relationship and wrote “Runaway” together in the living room of the Bongiovi family’s Sayreville home. The synth line in the intro was written by Mick Seeley, who was, at the time, part of John Bongiovi and the Wild Ones.

Jon later brought Karak to the Power Station. When it came time to record the Power Station version of “Runaway,” the band consisted of Hugh McDonald on bass (he would later join Bon Jovi in

**“AT THE TIME, DJS  
COULD BE RATHER  
INFLUENTIAL ... HE COULD  
GO ON THE RADIO AND  
TALK UP A SONG.”**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

1994 as an unofficial member), guitarist Tim Pierce, drummer Frankie LaRocka, and keyboardist Roy Bittan. In addition to “Runaway,” producers Tony Bongiovi and Lance Quinn chose more of Jon’s songs to record as demos, including “All Talk and No Action” and “Talking in Your Sleep.”

With professional demos now in hand, Jon sent tapes to every possible record company and manager—big and small—that he could find. There was no interest at all. Since Jon couldn’t gain the attention of a label with his demos, he brainstormed another way into the music industry. As Jon explained to NPR in 2018: “Who is the man who loves music the most and [is] probably the loneliest man in the music business? And that is the DJ. And at the time, DJs could be rather influential... He could go on the radio and talk up a song. I went to this station. And fortunately for me, they were so new that they didn’t have a receptionist.”

The station Jon was talking about—based in Lake Success, New York, a village in Long Island—was WAPP 103.5, the Apple. The year was 1983, and Jon



In the early 1980s, with professional demos in hand, Jon tried to get the attention of every record company and manager possible but wasn’t successful. So, he went straight to radio station DJs instead.











# "HE TOLD ME 'I WANT TO BE BIGGER THAN ELVIS, AND HE DIDN'T LOOK AT ME LAUGHINGLY. HE MEANT IT.'"

—Derek Shulman

put his tape in the hands of DJ Chip Hobart and promotion director John Lassman.

When the two listened to "Runaway," they heard a hit. Lassman immediately asked Jon if he wanted the song to be included in a compilation album of homegrown talent that the station planned to release called *New York Rocks 1983*. WAPP was going to use the sampler album to promote its first summer in the New York market. At first, Jon wasn't particularly interested. He wanted his own record deal, not to be included on a compilation. But he soon realized that this was a decent opportunity, so he seized it. (The sampler also included another then-unknown act called Twisted Sister.)

Released under the artist name John Bongiovi, "Runaway" received airplay not only in New York but other major markets from Tampa to Chicago. The song was soon a national hit that cracked the Top 40.

Now all the major labels had their eyes on Jon. He couldn't get their attention before, but with a radio hit to his name, they wanted to release the album that would cash in on the hit single. A bidding war broke out, and, in the end, PolyGram won.

Derek Shulman, former frontman of proggers Gentle Giant, had just joined PolyGram as an A&R representative. In his third month at the job, he heard about Jon through his network of people. Shulman checked out the WAPP sampler, and his interest was piqued. He went to Sayreville to meet Jon and immediately saw a young man that was impossibly driven. "He told me 'I want to be bigger than Elvis, and he didn't look at me laughingly. He meant it,'" Shulman recalled.

Now Jon had a record deal and a hit song. But what he didn't have was a band to back him. The all-star talent that helped him record the Power Station demos would be almost impossible to gather as a touring group—some came from Springsteen's E Street Band as well as Rick Springfield's band, an artist who was very hot at the time.

Jon was on the clock because Shulman wanted him to cut a full album as soon as possible. As he said to the young artist who wanted to be bigger

than Elvis: "So ... let me know when you put a band together."

It was game on. Jon first reached out to David Bryan, who at the time was a pre-med student at Rutgers University. Bryan had just gotten an audition for the Juilliard School, the most prestigious music conservatory in America, and was planning to go there if he was accepted. When Jon told him about his PolyGram deal, Bryan dropped everything and never looked back.

Next up was bassist Alec John Such, who was in a cover band called Phantom's Opera, in addition

At left: Derek Shulman of the British progressive rock band Gentle Giant, in London in 1975. Shulman later joined PolyGram and played a key role in signing Jon. Below: Bon Jovi bassist Alec John Such performs with the band in Los Angeles in 1984.







to an original band called Message, which featured guitarist Richie Sambora. They were on a summer tour promoting their EP and opening for Joe Cocker. The bass player switched allegiances and joined Jon's band, then connected him with drummer Tico Torres who was, in Jon's words, "the baddest-ass drummer in the land."

Torres already had an established career with Franke & the Knockouts. He was also married and owned his own house, which was a big deal to everyone else. It was a bit of a risk for Torres to give it all up for something with no guarantees. But on a Sunday, Jon gave him a good sales pitch and Torres was in.

All that was missing now was a guitar hero. To make it big in the '80s, every band had to have a hot guitar player—Van Halen had Eddie Van Halen, Guns N' Roses had Slash. Guitarist Dave "The Snake" Sabo, a childhood friend of Jon's from Sayreville, provided a temporary solution, joining for a three-week "Runaway" tour. (Several years later, Jon helped Sabo's band Skid Row get a deal with Atlantic Records.) But once guitarist Richie

**WHEN RICHIE SAMBORA SAW JON PERFORM FOR THE FIRST TIME ... IN NEW JERSEY, HE SAID, "THIS KID'S A STAR."**

Sambora entered the picture, the lineup was truly complete.

Sambora knew of Jon was from the New Jersey scene. When Sambora saw Jon perform for the first time at the Fountain Casino in Aberdeen, New Jersey, he said, "This kid's a star." Sambora went backstage and boldly introduced himself: "Hi, I'm Richie Sambora. I think I should be in

Above: Dave "Snake" Sabo of Skid Row joins guitarist Richie Sambora onstage during a Bon Jovi concert at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, in June 1989. At right: Sambora poses for a portrait in Tokyo, Japan, in 1985.













## “HI, I’M RICHIE SAMBORA. I THINK I SHOULD BE IN THIS BAND.”

—Richie Sambora

this band.” Jon was initially put off by what he perceived as Sambora’s arrogance. Jon had actually seen Sambora play previously and left that show unimpressed. But Jon gave him a chance, and at their first session together at the band’s rehearsal space on New Brunswick Avenue in Woodbridge, New Jersey, Sambora walked in intent on sucking the air out of the room.

Jon waltzed in late and arrived to hear the band sounding better than ever. Jon then said, “OK, you’re in” and, within a week, Jon had a full band. With a complete lineup in place, Jon played a showcase for the record company bigwigs. Shulman was blown away, and Jon became his first artist signed to Mercury Records, a PolyGram subsidiary.

The only thing left to decide was what to call this hot new group. Some of the ideas tossed around were “Johnny Electric” and “Intruder.” The issue was resolved when Shulman came up with the idea of calling the band Bon Jovi, a play on Jon’s family name, and with that the idea that he also change the spelling of ‘John’, dropping the ‘h’ for good measure, to match the spelling of the group.

On Jan. 21, 1984, the band’s debut album *Bon Jovi* was released. Reviews of the record were lukewarm. Some critics found the group—still a bunch of musicians who had not yet found their identity as a cohesive whole—to be formulaic. Many dismissed them as an uninspired collection of pretty-faced pop stars with an artificial edginess that smashed together hard rock with glam, all designed to capitalize on the music video craze being driven by MTV. Listeners didn’t care if that was true or not. The album enjoyed moderate success on the charts, bringing the band one step closer to global stardom.

The original members of Bon Jovi in Tokyo, Japan, in 1985 (from left): bassist Alec John Such, drummer Tico Torres, leader Jon Bon Jovi, keyboardist David Bryan and guitarist Richie Sambora.





4  
BON + JOVI  
T

# SLIPPERY WHEN WET

Bon Jovi's first  
two albums were  
fairly successful,  
but it was the  
band's third effort  
that truly set  
them apart.

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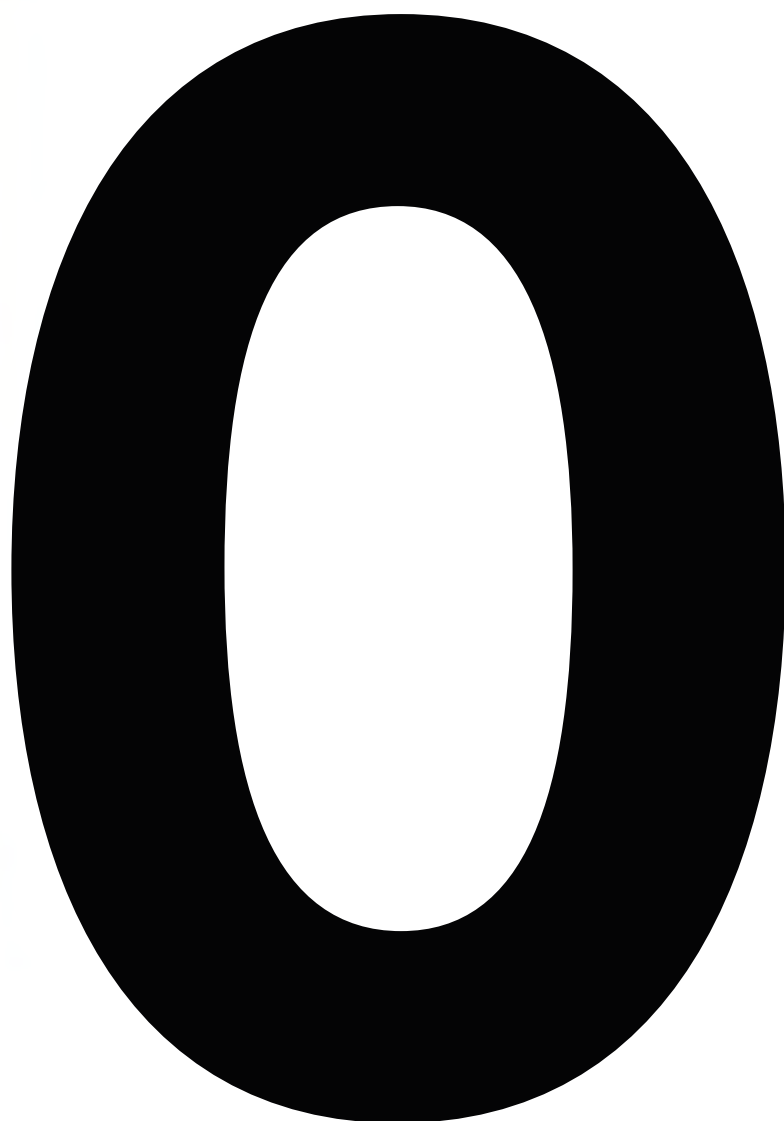


Richie Sambora, Jon Bon Jovi  
and Alec John Such of Bon Jovi  
put on a show at Nakano  
Sunplaza in Tokyo, Japan, in  
April 1985.









On Aug. 1, 1981, a new cable TV network launched with a color bar test, followed by a longer-than-necessary countdown of a rocket preparing for takeoff. When the spacecraft finally lifts, the voice of John Lack (one of the network's creators) announces, "Ladies and gentlemen, rock and roll."

With that, MTV was officially part of the music business. The industry would never be the same again.

Within five years of MTV's launch, if you were a recording artist without a music video, you weren't going to have a hit. And—like some artists caught blindsided by the latest shiny object to fascinate young audiences—if you didn't project well on camera or have a great visual idea that could replace the need to see you and your band, you might not have much of a long-term career.

By the mid-1980s, an entire genre of bands became wildly popular because of their appeal in music videos. The genre was called hair metal. The sound was heavier than pop, but more melodic and tuneful than hard rock and real heavy metal. And—true to the name—the aspect of these predominantly male-populated bands that stood out most of all was

Members of Ratt and Bon Jovi as well as Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee snap a group photo at Hart Plaza in Detroit, in June 1985. Hair metal bands became wildly popular in the mid-1980s because of their appeal in music videos.





the hair: long, flowing, sometimes fluffy, always well-conditioned hair.

The two classic hair metal bands were Mötley Crüe and Ratt, and their image was as loud and explosive as their music. Members of both groups wore their long hair teased up. They also wore makeup. Their choice of clothing was an interesting blend of glam, punk and BDSM influences, with tight leather or spandex pants, ripped shirts, spiked armbands and headbands all part of the uniform. The recipe worked—these bands cranked out music videos that generated screen time, and the screen time sold records.

When the video for “Runaway” was released, Bon Jovi definitely looked like a new hair metal band. They checked all the boxes: Jon’s shoulder-length hair is practically drenched in Aqua Net. He wears a ripped white shirt beneath a brown fringe jacket with tight spandex (or possibly leather) pants, the color of which is lavender. The rest of the band behind him is dressed for the occasion as well, but compared to Jon they look like bikers

in black leather. Besides, you hardly even notice them because Jon fills the screen, singing with great intensity as he looks into the camera with a clean-shaven baby face and gentle eyes. The rest of the band gets more screen time during the instrumental break, but by then it doesn’t much matter. The face you remember is Jon’s.

But even from the beginning, Bon Jovi was never truly a hair metal band. Most of those groups sprung from the West Coast, cutting their teeth at clubs on the Sunset Strip. Their sound was different too, rooted in heavy metal. Bon Jovi’s music had more of an R&B and blues influence, which wasn’t surprising because that was at the heart of the Jersey Shore sound.

The catalyst that influenced Bon Jovi to adopt—at least visually—a hair metal vibe was Doc McGhee. After the band was assembled, he gradually transitioned into becoming its manager. He replaced Peter Mantas, Jon’s childhood friend, who had stuck with the band through the rocky early days but knew he couldn’t support them much longer as they were becoming too big, too fast.

In the Bon Jovi music video for “Runaway,” Jon sports long hair teased up with hairspray, a ripped white shirt beneath a brown fringe jacket and tight lavender pants.





McGhee had managed Mötley Crüe and took them to the top. In Bon Jovi, he saw a way to evolve the formula to something even more successful. One day in 1983, Jon and McGhee went to a record store together. As they looked at album covers, they started talking about huge acts like Van Halen and Journey. McGhee said to Jon, “We could be like them. Only bigger.”

McGhee’s confidence appealed to the always-ambitious Jon. It matched his goals precisely. By the time Bon Jovi broke into the Top 40 of Billboard’s Hot 100, McGhee had set up a host of gigs for the band—domestically and abroad—to get them even wider exposure. The band toured the United States with the Scorpions, Europe with Kiss and Japan with Whitesnake.

In March 1985, Bon Jovi released their sophomore album, *7800° Fahrenheit*. The album was received favorably by fans, and two songs, “Only Lonely” and “In and Out of Love,” made it to the Billboard Hot 100. The album stayed on the Billboard 200 for two years and reached platinum

**“IT TOOK US THREE ALBUMS TO REALLY GET IT RIGHT.... BY THE THIRD ONE, WE GOT IT.”**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

status in 1987. This success opened many doors for Bon Jovi, and they secured their first headlining slots in Japan, where they sold out 10 shows.

Behind the scenes, McGhee believed that the secret ingredient to make Bon Jovi bigger than the rest was Jon himself. No matter how he dressed, how long his hair was or how hard he rocked, there was no disguising that beneath it all he had the face of a good guy. People liked him—especially young women. And unlike Mötley Crüe, mothers liked the

David Bryan and Richie Sambora of Bon Jovi greet fans on the rooftop of Seibu Department Store in the Ikebukuro district of Tokyo, Japan, in April 1985. The success of Bon Jovi’s sophomore album led to the band securing their first headlining slots in Japan.







band, too, because they liked Jon. Being “the cute one” wasn’t edgy, but it was going to sell a lot of records.

Musically, Jon continued to build relationships with the power players in the industry. When Bon Jovi toured with Kiss, Jon became friends with the band’s co-founder, rhythm guitarist Paul Stanley. Jon especially liked a Kiss song called “Heaven’s on Fire.” Stanley told him that it was written with legendary songwriter and producer Desmond Child. Jon asked if Stanley could make an introduction, and the Kiss frontman obliged.

Soon, a writing session was scheduled, and Child rented a car and headed to New Jersey to meet with Jon and Sambora. They convened at Sambora’s parents’ place—a small wooden house at the edge of a marsh, across from an oil refinery. There were posters of Farrah Fawcett and Kiss hanging in Sambora’s room. There, they wrote together in the basement, surrounded by a washing machine and space heaters, with a cheap tape recorder and a small electronic keyboard perched atop a Formica table repurposed as a keyboard stand.

Child walked in with a song title—“You Give Love a Bad Name”—written on a piece of paper in his back pocket. When Child said it out loud, the room lit up. “Jon looked me straight in the eye,” Child would later remember. “That’s when he gave me the first glimpse of the billion-dollar smile. I saw nothing but teeth.”

Jon had previously recorded a song called “Shot Through the Heart” for the Power Station demos, and he brought that catchy phrase back as the powerful opening line of “You Give Love a Bad Name.” The magic moment prompted a three-way high five between Jon, Sambora and Child. Within 90 minutes the song was complete.

For the next session three weeks later, Child insisted they come into New York City to his friend’s apartment where he was crashing. Child played some introspective open chords on the out-of-tune piano there, and the mood was set to start writing “Livin’ on a Prayer.” For lyrical inspiration, Jon thought about his friends Bonnie and Joe, and Sambora recalled his parents, who had a tough time making ends meet.

The song was personal for Child, who reflected on his girlfriend Maria Vidal, with whom he had a band called Desmond Child & Rouge. (Child’s demo

## “THAT’S WHEN HE GAVE ME THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE BILLION-DOLLAR SMILE.”

—Desmond Child

version can be found on YouTube, a slow rendition that’s more ballad than stadium singalong.) Vidal was a singing waitress at Once Upon a Stove, a restaurant/antique store in New York City at the time when Child was working as a cab driver. Vidal’s waitress stage name was Gina Velvet (she resembled Gina Lollobrigida), and Child originally thought of “Johnny and Gina” because his real name was John Charles Barrett. Jon nixed that idea. “People will think Johnny is me,” he reasoned.

It was hard to argue, so the male character’s name was changed to a sound alike “Tommy.” Once the song was complete, Sambora and Child loved it. Jon, however, was not really into it because he felt it was too sensitive, and its medium tempo didn’t quite



Clockwise from top left: Bon Jovi backstage at the Monsters of Rock festival in Mannheim, West Germany, in August 1986; Desmond Child on *Saturday Night Live* in 1979; Jon performs in Donington Park in Castle Donington, England, in August 1985.





rock hard enough. Child and Sambora were sure it was going to be a hit and had to plead with Jon to record it. The finished product would later be named one of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time by *Rolling Stone*.

These songs all ended up on Bon Jovi's third album, *Slippery When Wet*. When that album dropped, the band's success jumped to another level. Now they weren't just another hair band—they were something unique unto themselves. "It took us three albums to really get it right," Jon would later say. "Though the first two did OK, by the third one, we got it."

*Slippery When Wet* added a polished commercial sheen to the band's core rock sound and transformed Bon Jovi into pop megastars. Jon continued to make sure there was just enough edge to add some danger to the band. The title *Slippery When Wet* was inspired by a sign at a Vancouver strip club. The original album cover featured an image of a voluptuous young woman named Angela Chidnese that photographer Mark Weiss' assistant found on

the boardwalk down at the Jersey Shore. In the original cover photo, Chidnese is shown wearing a wet yellow T-shirt with "Slippery When Wet" written on it, framed inside a pink border. This cover got scrapped just before the album's release, and was replaced with a picture of a wet black garbage bag with the album's title written on it. The explanations for the change were that the label feared public outcry over the sexist imagery, and that Jon also disliked the pink border. Still, the controversial image was used in Japanese versions of the album.

*Slippery When Wet* was a massive commercial success, hitting No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart, where it remained for eight weeks. It was 1987's top-selling album and is one of the best-selling albums in U.S. history. The album also spawned three Top 10 singles: "Wanted Dead or Alive," "You Give Love a Bad Name" and "Livin' on a Prayer." The latter two songs reached No. 1. As Child later concluded: "It was one of those moments where a star is born."

Above from left: Australian fans wear Bon Jovi T-shirts to celebrate the band's arrival in Sydney in September 1987; Jon plays acoustic guitar while singing "Wanted Dead or Alive" in 1987. At right: Jon at Madison Square Garden in New York City in 1987.









# 5 BON + JOVI FAMILY MAN

Some rock stars  
rebel against all  
institutions,  
including family.  
But for Jon, his has  
always been a  
source of support.

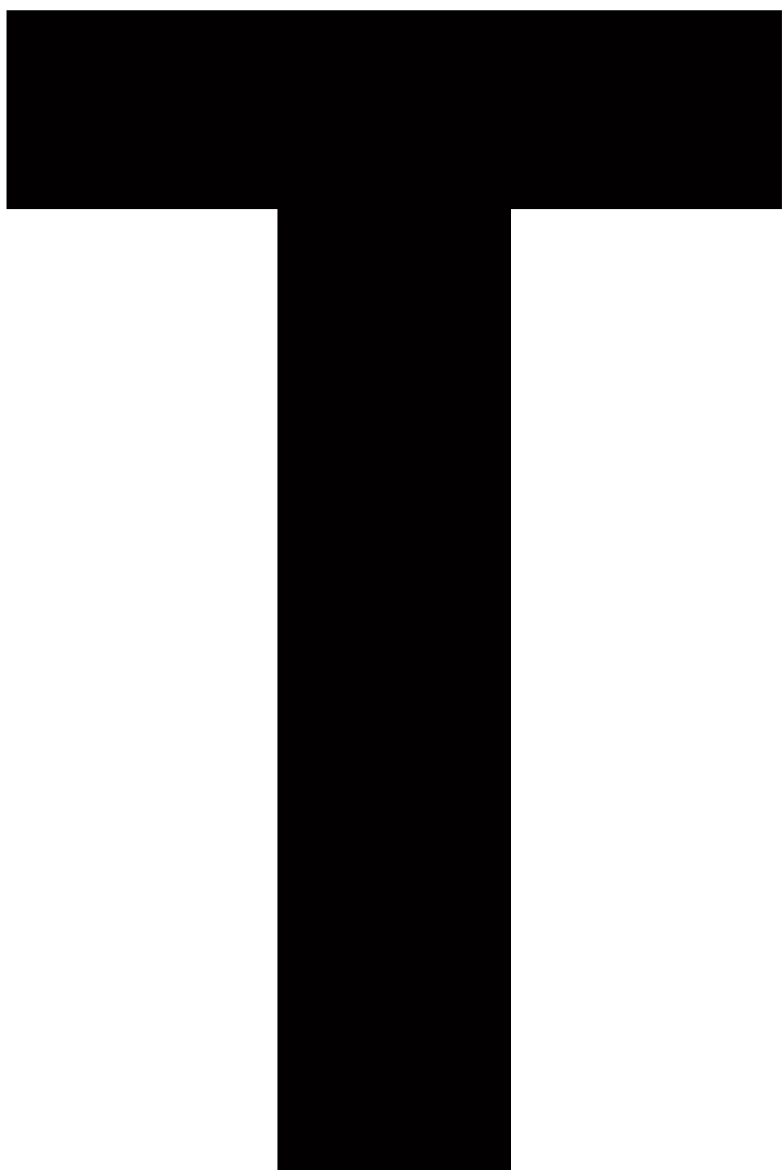
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Jon Bon Jovi with wife Dorothea Hurley in 1991. The pair met at Sayreville War Memorial High School and have been married for more than 30 years.









The enormous success of *Slippery When Wet* did more than validate Jon Bon Jovi's hard work and commitment to fulfilling his dreams. His band's third album release also gave Jon enough money to move out of 16 Robinhood Drive—his parents' house in Sayreville.

Not that Jon necessarily minded the situation at home. His parents were, by all accounts, extremely supportive of Jon throughout his career. Even when he was out until 3 a.m. playing the club circuit as a teenager, his parents considered this “work” more than “play.”

Some rock superstars rebel against all institutions—including family. But not Jon. To him, family has always been a source of purpose and support. The same is also true of his hometown of Sayreville, New Jersey. It's therefore appropriate that Jon met his future wife of more than 32 years—Dorothea Hurley—at Sayreville War Memorial High School.

At first, the two were just friends. Dorothea, a junior karate champion, was going out with Jon's buddy Bobby. She sat next to Jon in history class, and he would look over her shoulder to peek at her answers. Soon, Jon's feelings about his pal's

girlfriend started to become more complicated. Dorothea was the inspiration for Jon's song “Bobby's Girl,” which he recorded as an early demo at the Power Station. The lyrics went “She's Bobby's girl, Johnny, you're playing with dynamite.” Then, one summer when Bobby went off to the Navy, Jon swooped in and won Dorothea's heart.

It seemed like a fairy-tale romance, but during Jon's journey to rock superstardom, they hit a few bumps along the way. After *Bon Jovi* was released in 1984, the band toured around the world, opening for Kiss and the Scorpions. Jon recalled: “I went on the road. She wasn't very excited about that prospect

**“I WENT ON THE ROAD.  
SHE WASN'T VERY  
EXCITED ABOUT THAT  
PROSPECT.”**

—Jon Bon Jovi



Above: Jon and his parents, Carol and John Sr., attend the Silver Clef Awards in 1990. At right: Jon and Dorothea take in the premiere of *Moonstruck* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in December 1987.











# "I DID THE DRUG THING VERY YOUNG AND WISED UP VERY YOUNG TOO.... I'VE ALWAYS FELT I DIDN'T HAVE THE MENTAL STABILITY TO HANDLE DRUGS."

—Jon Bon Jovi

and said 'why should I sit here and wait?'" The couple broke up, and Jon was seen out on the town with actress Diane Lane. Jon and Dorothea reunited after the *7800° Fahrenheit* tour was over when Jon came back to New Jersey. He begged Dorothea to reconcile, and they've remained together ever since.

On April 29, 1989, Bon Jovi was in Los Angeles for a sold-out three-show run at the Forum. Jon and Dorothea were staying at the St. James Club in West Hollywood. When Jon opened the curtain, his view directly faced a billboard with his face on it. It was a surreal moment that inspired Jon and Dorothea to sneak off to Las Vegas and tie the knot. Together, they have four children: Stephanie Rose (born 1993), Jesse James Louis (born 1995), Jacob Hurley (born 2002) and Romeo Jon (born 2004).

Relationships like Jon and Dorothea's are unicorns in rock 'n' roll. A comparably strong example that comes immediately to mind is Rolling Stones legend Charlie Watts, who was married to Shirley Shepherd for 57 years before he died in 2021. But as amazing and admirable as that marriage was, Watts was also the band's drummer, not the lead singer, a position that openly invites temptations, mistakes and bad behavior on a regular basis. (For the record, Mick Jagger has been married—and divorced—only once, but has children from eight different relationships.)

Jon is a different breed. He has never claimed to be a saint, but he also appears to have never let any of his missteps get out of hand. He told *Men's Health*, "I did the drug thing very young and wised up very young too, because I was into drugs a little too much. I mean, I was entrepreneurial even then, buying quarter pounds of dope and trying to make a couple bucks. But then, did you ever smoke dope that was laced with PCP and then have that whole summer of hallucinations? It was f--king awful. I was the guy who bogarted the joint all the time, ran

right through the screen door, and was like, 'Woah!' I f--ked up, man. That's good, though. That's why I've never been a drug guy. I've always felt I didn't have the mental stability to handle drugs."

Unbeknownst to Jon, his daughter Stephanie also experimented with drugs. This led to a very disconcerting event that took place on Nov. 14, 2012. While a freshman at Hamilton College, Stephanie was found unresponsive in her third floor dorm room. She had overdosed on heroin and was

Stephanie walks the White Trash Beautiful fashion show at the IndigO2 in London in 2010. The clothing line was a collaboration between Richie Sambora and designer Nikki Lund.



At left from top: Jon and Dorothea and their children Stephanie, Romeo and Jacob attend the Centrepoint Winter Whites Gala in London in 2013; Jon enjoys the gala from the audience.



**“I FEEL IT WAS A TERRIBLE TRAGIC LESSON OF LIFE BUT I THANK GOD EVERY DAY BECAUSE SHE IS WHOLE. IT HAPPENED AND IT HAS GONE.”**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

rushed to the hospital, where she was brought back to consciousness.

Stephanie called her father herself, from the hospital, to tell him the news, waking him up at 2 a.m. It was the kind of call all parents dread.

“It was horrible, a horrible moment,” Jon later told the U.K.’s *Mirror*. “It was my worst moment as a father.”

It was also a moment that passed for Stephanie, with support from her parents.

“I feel it was a terrible tragic lesson of life but I thank God every day because she is whole,” Jon continued. “It happened and it has gone. I know personally people whose sons and daughters, where it was a lot, lot worse. That could have been Stephanie.”

In 2017, Stephanie graduated from the New School in New York City. Jon and Dorothea were at the ceremony taking pictures, just like all the other parents. Later that year, Stephanie came onstage at a Bon Jovi show in Las Vegas and danced with her dad during the performance of “I Got the Girl,” which was written about her when she was 7. The song ended with hugs and kisses, a victory jump and a triumphant high five.

The entire family also rallied together in early 2020 because of COVID-19. Jon and Dorothea decided to leave their Manhattan apartment with Romeo and have all the kids move back in with them at the house where they raised their oldest children in Middletown, New Jersey.

“We spent more time in that house than we have in over a decade,” Jon told *People* magazine. Like many families during the early days of the

Dorothea, Jon and their son Romeo attend the Love Rocks NYC benefit concert livestream for God’s Love We Deliver at the Beacon Theater in New York City in June 2021.







GIVE  
STEVEN & ALY KATON  
COHEN FOUNDATION  
PRESENTS  
LOVE

GRAMERCY  
TAVERN

GOD'S LOVE  
DELIVER

Secunda  
Family  
Foundation

ALL  
ACCESS  
LOVE ROCKS









**“OUR FOCUS HAS ALWAYS BEEN FAMILY FIRST AND MAKING SURE THAT PEOPLE ARE DOING WELL. WE LIKE EACH OTHER. WE SPENT A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER.”**

**—Dorothea Hurley**

pandemic, the Bongiovis passed the time watching movies, baking and doing crafts together.

“For about a month, our whole family was intact. Then the big kids finally said, ‘We’re out,’ and made a run for it,” Jon recalled. Son Jacob later caught a mild case of COVID and recovered. Jon also tested positive right before a show in Florida in late October 2021, requiring him to miss the performance. But he appeared to be feeling fine and cancelled only because it was required.

“Our focus has always been family first and making sure that people are doing well,” Dorothea told *People* in explaining how she and Jon have been able to maintain such a strong bond. “We like each other. We spent a lot of time together.”

Jon agrees: “Having grown up together and grown together... we really like each other. We want to hang out.”

Musically, Jon revealed what family means to him in the song “Story of Love” from Bon Jovi’s 15th studio album, *2020*. The song’s sentimental music video features never-before-seen pictures and videos of Jon’s family, including a vintage clip of his parents, John Sr. and Carol, dancing. The opening lyrics read:

*Fathers love daughters like mothers love sons  
They’ve been writing our story before there was one  
From the day you arrive, ’til you walk, ’til you run  
There is nothing but pride, there is nothing but love*

At left: Jon and Dorothea attend the 48th Golden Globe Awards in Los Angeles in January 1991. Above: The couple attend the Jackie Robinson Foundation ROBIE Awards Dinner, where they were honored for their humanitarian work, in New York City in March 2020.





6  
BON • JOVI

# CHALLENGES

After wrapping  
up a grueling  
18-month world  
tour, Bon Jovi  
went on a  
much-needed  
hiatus.

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From left to right: David Bryan,  
Alec John Such, Jon Bon Jovi,  
Richie Sambora and Tico Torres  
in August 1992.





To fans, a hit album—or a string of hit albums—is the milestone that marks the moment when a band has arrived. But for most acts, this is also the time when things start to fall apart. Egos get bigger, the stakes get higher and expectations can inflate to unreasonable proportions.

*Slippery When Wet* was that turning point for Bon Jovi. Now the hottest band on the planet, the job shifted from “making it” to finding a way to stay on top. A money-minting machine, the band toured nonstop to maintain their position. The *Slippery When Wet* tour started in July 1986 and ran straight through October 1987. Bon Jovi hit practically every pocket of the globe, from Japan to Australia to Finland. After more than 200 sold-out shows, with up to 18 songs performed at every concert, everyone involved was mentally and physically exhausted.

In his effort to give 20,000 people their money’s worth night after night, Jon damaged his voice. He started struggling to hit some of the high notes on important hits, and David Bryan and Richie Sambora had to help cover some of his vocal parts. After a while, singing caused Jon such agony that he needed regular steroid shots before shows just to make it through the night. A vocal coach was also hired to help Jon learn how to better preserve his voice. Still, Jon was vomiting offstage nightly, his bright smile and healthy complexion turning



increasingly sickly. His brother Matthew said he “looked like a mix of losing weight yet being puffy. When you’re worked and dragged that much, it looks like you’ve just been in the ring with [Mike] Tyson for 12 rounds.”

As soon as the *Slippery When Wet* tour was over, the band went straight back to the studio to begin work on a follow-up album, *New Jersey*, without any break. *New Jersey* became the band’s second consecutive No. 1 album and produced two No. 1 hits, “Bad Medicine” and “I’ll Be There for You,” in

Above: Fans clamor to get a good look as members of Bon Jovi arrive for their *Slippery When Wet* tour dates in Sydney, Australia, in September 1987. By the end of the tour, the band had played more than 200 sold-out shows worldwide, leaving everyone exhausted.





addition to three other Top 10 hits. Then Bon Jovi embarked on another tour to support the album that spanned 230 shows over a 16-month period.

At the end of the *New Jersey* tour, everyone went their separate ways without any formal goodbyes. For seven straight years, the members of Bon Jovi had spent practically every waking moment together. Now they were sick of one another. In January 1991, the band took a hiatus that lasted about a year.

That didn't mean the members of the band stopped working. Richie Sambora released *Stranger in This Town*, his first solo album, in 1991. David Bryan, Tico Torres and guest star Eric Clapton appeared on the





album, which reached No. 36 on the Billboard 200. Bryan also started getting involved with soundtracks and wrote the score for the movie *Netherworld*.

In the summer of 1990, Jon met actor Emilio Estevez through actress Ally Sheedy, who was dating Sambora at the time. Estevez wanted to use “Wanted Dead or Alive” as the closing credits song in his movie *Young Guns II*. Jon was flattered but didn’t think the song was an appropriate fit lyrically. Jon offered to write a song in the “Wanted Dead or Alive” vein, and came up with “Blaze of Glory.” That song was so well-received that Jon was then asked to write the whole soundtrack for *Young Guns II*. “Blaze of Glory” became both the *Young Guns II* soundtrack and Jon’s first solo album, and featuring such guests as Elton John, Little Richard and Jeff Beck. The title track hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and earned Jon both a Golden Globe and an Academy Award nomination for best original song. Jon appeared onscreen very briefly in *Young Guns II*, which further encouraged him to pursue other acting projects.

Bon Jovi manager Doc McGhee saw all these extracurricular activities as a huge conflict to the band’s musical aspirations, and the two sides parted ways. Jon started a new company, Bon Jovi Management, to fill the void.



This marked a brand-new chapter in the band’s journey, one that Jon treated like a fresh start. When he thought it was time to gather the band back together to work, he first introduced everyone to Dr. Lou Cox—a clinical psychologist who had previously done “rock band therapy” with the members of Aerosmith.

At first, the band members were reluctant. In the documentary *When We Were Beautiful*, David Bryan admitted that he didn’t think talking to a “f--ing shrink” was very rock ‘n’ roll. But, after going through the process, Bryan did admit that Cox “helped us to be honest enough to go on.”

Jon in particular let his guard down around Cox because he felt the doctor was there with no motive other than to help. After everyone cleared the air and got things off their chest—all the annoyances, big and small, that can bring a band down—they were finally able to move forward. Jon said in *When We Were Beautiful*: “By 1992, I can honestly say ... everybody understood the future.”

**“WHEN YOU’RE WORKED ... THAT MUCH, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU’VE JUST BEEN IN THE RING WITH [MIKE] TYSON FOR 12 ROUNDS.”**

**—Matthew Bongiovi**

Clockwise from left: Jon wins a Golden Globe for his *Young Guns II* song “Blaze of Glory”; Bon Jovi promote their 1988 album *New Jersey*; Richie Sambora and Cher at Sambora’s *Stranger in This Town* album release party; Jon and Sambora in Moscow in 1989.













Bon Jovi was back together and hit the studio to record *Keep the Faith*. Times had changed, a fact that was most noticeably marked in how Jon's signature flowing locks—the golden tresses which were instrumental in making hair metal mainstream—were now gone, replaced by a stylish short cut. Musically, producer Bruce Fairbairn, who had been with the band since *Slippery When Wet*, was replaced by Bob Rock. Messing with Bon Jovi's magic formula was a risky move, but *Keep the Faith* was very successful, going double platinum in America.

The future was looking up for Bon Jovi. Then, in 1994, the band faced its first major lineup change

**“BY 1992, I CAN  
HONESTLY SAY ...  
EVERYBODY UNDERSTOOD  
THE FUTURE.”**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

Left: Jon, David Bryan and Richie Sambora in Munich, Germany, in 1993. Below: Producer Bob Rock replaced Bon Jovi's longtime producer Bruce Fairbairn on *Keep the Faith*.







**“HE JUST DIDN’T SHOW UP. HE DIDN’T DO IT TO HURT ME. HE DIDN’T DO IT TO HURT DAVID OR TICO. HE DID IT FOR PERSONAL REASONS.”**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

since its inception. Original bassist Alec John Such was fired (reportedly for poor live performances) and replaced by Hugh McDonald, who had played on Jon’s early “Runaway” demo.

Privately, other band members were also going through dark times. In 2006, Sambora’s wife, actress Heather Locklear, filed for divorce, and during this period, Locklear’s best friend, actress Denise Richards, was also in the process of divorcing Charlie Sheen. Sambora and Richards then hooked up, which provoked a rash of distracting tabloid headlines. Both Sambora’s father and Richards’ mother were also battling cancer, and when Sambora’s dad passed away, the stress caused him and Richards to break up as well.

In 2008, Sambora was pulled over after a police officer saw his car weaving in and out of lanes in Laguna Beach, California. Sambora’s girlfriend, along with two children—Sambora’s 10-year-old daughter Ava and her cousin—were in the car, and when Sambora failed his field sobriety tests, he was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence. He faced six months in prison but struck a plea deal and got off with three years of probation and a \$1,600 fine, in addition to having to attend three months of a first-offender alcohol awareness class.

Torres also struggled with alcohol addiction and, in Jon’s words, was a “very mean, mean man,” when he was drunk. Torres traced this to the lifelong anger from his father leaving him when he was a

Above: Richie Sambora with then-wife Heather Locklear in 1995. Opposite page: Bon Jovi in concert in Boston in April 2018. Guitarist Phil X replaced Sambora in the band after Sambora’s sudden departure in 2013.





kid. He went to rehab and sorted himself out, later discovering golf and art as new passions.

Keyboardist David Bryan suffered through a particularly wicked stomach illness that he believed came from parasites he got in South America while on tour with Bon Jovi. He was in the hospital for around two weeks and left 40 pounds lighter. After that, Bryan's luck didn't improve. His right index finger was sliced to the bone in an accident with a circular saw. Even after numerous surgeries, doctors told him he wouldn't be able to use that finger again. Bryan was out of commission for over a year but still wouldn't give up. After intense physical therapy and "nerve resetting,"

which involved shocking the finger by poking it into buckets of ice, Legos and other things, his finger returned to normal.

But the biggest challenge to Bon Jovi was yet to come. In Calgary in 2013, just before the 21st show of the "Because We Can" tour, Richie Sambora didn't show up to the concert. It wasn't an accident. Sambora had decided—suddenly and unexpectedly—to quit the band after 30 years. There were 82 more dates scheduled on the tour, and guitarist Phil X was recruited to fill in, becoming a full-time member in 2016. "It was personal issues. He was never fired, and as he finally admitted on television, there was never a fight. He just didn't show up," Jon told *Today Australia*. "He didn't do it to hurt me. He didn't do it to hurt David or Tico. He did it for personal reasons."

Sambora's departure put Jon in a deep depression. The two men still haven't patched up the hurt feelings that resulted. A few years after the split, Jon told the *Sun*, "It was a very, very difficult time that I haven't fully rebounded from yet."

In 2015, Bon Jovi released *Burning Bridges*, the band's first album without Sambora. The name of the title track summarized how everyone in the band felt—especially Jon—about what had happened with their longtime guitarist, collaborator and friend.







7

BON + JOVI

# SMART ABOUT BUSINESS

Jon Bon Jovi  
is more than a  
rock icon. He's also  
a very shrewd  
and driven  
entrepreneur and  
philanthropist.

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# BJ SOUL KITCHEN



Jon and Dorothea speak to the media after opening the BEAT (Bringing Everyone All Together) Center—where families in need can access food and other resources—in Toms River, New Jersey, on May 10, 2016.









The secret to Jon Bon Jovi's success and longevity—he is approaching four decades in the spotlight as a global superstar—isn't his killer smile or fabulous hair. What keeps him on top is that behind the rock star facade, he is a sharp, shrewd and driven businessman.

Today, Jon is more than a performer. He is also the CEO of the Bon Jovi brand, a job that has allowed him to build a net worth of approximately \$410 million.

Even the band is run like a business. Jon, and Jon alone, is the one member whose name is on the record contracts. The rest of the group are classified as paid employees. (It's not called "Bon Jovi" for nothing.)

As Jon explained in an interview with CNBC, he recognized the need to do things differently from other performers at a very young age. "You start to understand the term 'the music business,'" he explained. "Suddenly you went from being the fun-loving kid singer in a rock band to the head of a corporation. To a boss."

Bon Jovi, the band, has never made decisions based on group consensus. Jon calls the shots on

From left: Bon Jovi members Phil X, Tico Torres, Jon Bon Jovi, David Bryan and Hugh McDonald pose for a portrait while promoting their album *This House Is Not for Sale* in 2016.





**“WE’RE HUGELY SUCCESSFUL, SO YOU GOTTA GO, ‘OK.’  
... HE’S NOT GOING TO TURN AROUND AND GO ... ‘LET’S  
JUST MAKE THIS A COMPLETE DEMOCRACY.’”**

**—David Bryan**

every single decision. “Jon is the leader of this organization. It’s defined,” Richie Sambora told *60 Minutes* in a 2008 interview, a few years before he left the group.

It’s a power dynamic that has sometimes led to tension. But all of the band members knew what they signed up for from the start—the days when “Runaway” was a radio hit credited only to Jon, leaving him with the task of hiring a band to support him on an album.

As keyboardist David Bryan explained, “We’re hugely successful, so you gotta go, ‘OK.’ Can’t fight City Hall, you know what I mean? He’s not going to

turn around and go, ‘You know what? Let’s just make this a complete democracy.’”

As the leader of Bon Jovi, Jon shoulders pressures and responsibilities that no one else does. The cost of doing business is high. Between the wardrobe stylist, sound guy and the countless other people behind the scenes, many depend on Jon for their livelihood. Each live show costs millions to produce, and if Jon can’t make a show, there’s a huge price to pay.

In the early days, Jon and Richie Sambora found success writing songs on the side for artists including Cher. (Sambora dated Cher for a time as well.)

Above: The band appears on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon* in 2009. At right: Richie Sambora and Cher attend the 1989 MTV Video Music Awards. Cher’s 1987 single, “We All Sleep Alone,” was written and produced by Jon, Sambora and Desmond Child.









Cher's song "We All Sleep Alone" was written by Jon, Sambora and Desmond Child, and hit No. 14 on the Billboard Hot 100. Together, Jon and Sambora formed a publishing company, New Jersey Underground Music, Inc., which produced bands like Loverboy.

New Jersey Underground Music, Inc. also played a part in the saga of Skid Row. Dave "The Snake" Sabo, a childhood friend of Jon's from Sayreville, helped Jon by playing on several showcases with

**"IT'S NOT A CASE OF SAMSON AND DELILAH HERE. I DIDN'T LOSE MY STRENGTH OR NOTHING WHEN I CUT MY HAIR."**

**-Jon Bon Jovi**

him right after "Runaway" hit, when Jon was still trying to put his band together. Jon and Sabo made a pact that if one of them made it big, he'd help the other one out. Jon made it huge, and true to his word, in 1989, Jon helped Sabo's band Skid Row land a record deal with Atlantic Records. Jon then took Skid Row on the road as the opening act for Bon Jovi's New Jersey Syndicate tour. Skid Row's self-titled debut album went quintuple platinum and reached No. 6 on the Billboard 200.

That's when things took a sour turn. As they were starting out, Skid Row signed a publishing deal with New Jersey Underground Music, Inc. The deal, however, heavily favored Jon and Sambora, and when the money came rolling in, most of it went into their pockets. Sambora later gave his share back to Skid Row, but Jon did not. Jon's relationship with the members of Skid Row grew so strained that there were threats of violence, especially between Jon and Skid Row front man Sebastian Bach.

Jon has mellowed with the passage of time. But, when it comes to business, he remains by all accounts ruthless. The music business is very fickle and the public's attention span very short. Jon

Members of Bon Jovi, the Ozzy Osbourne band, the Scorpions and Skid Row arrive at the airport for the Moscow Music Peace Festival at Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, Russia, on Aug. 9, 1989.





understood from the start that if he didn't adapt to trends and work to stay relevant, his star could fall as quickly as it rose.

As ridiculous as it may seem, Jon took a huge business gamble in 1992 when he decided to cut his hair. The haircut was such big news that even CNN covered it. Industry insiders were worried that he would lose some of his female following. Jon knew it was time for a change, that it was better to be ahead with his look rather than behind, and he was able to handle the attention around his hair with charm and humor. "It's not a case of Samson and Delilah here. I didn't lose my strength or nothing when I cut my hair," he said in a 1993 interview.

The haircut marked the band's comeback album after a long hiatus. *Keep the Faith* eschewed many of the '80s glam metal elements that characterized Bon Jovi's sound in favor of a more modern pop sound. Even with this drastic change in image and music, *Keep the Faith* was still a smash hit, reaching No. 5 on the Billboard 200 and going double platinum.

By 2000, metal was mostly gone from popular culture. Accordingly, for *Crush*, Jon transformed the band's sound again with an adult contemporary

makeover. While musically, *Crush* was a far cry from the heavy edge Bon Jovi's early albums had, lyrically, Jon still touched on a lot of the working-class themes that brought him his early fame. He even referenced "Tommy and Gina" on the lead single, "It's My Life."

Jon's early songs like "Wanted Dead or Alive" and "Blaze of Glory" teased country elements. When country music became popular on mainstream radio, Jon fully exploited the country side of his musical personality. He performed with Sugarland, a country duo, in September 2005 on an episode of *CMT Crossroads*. This performance marked the debut of "Who Says You Can't Go Home," a duet with Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles. The song was later released as the second single from Bon Jovi's ninth album, *Have a Nice Day*. This album featured two versions of "Who Says You Can't Go Home," one of which is the duet with Nettles that hit No. 1 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart.

A strong believer in a diversified portfolio, Jon is also involved with business ventures that indulge his passions away from music. A lifelong football fanatic, Jon became co-owner of the Philadelphia

Clockwise from left: Jon cut off his famous long locks in 1992; Jennifer Nettles of Sugarland joins Bon Jovi to sing "Who Says You Can't Go Home" in Atlanta in January 2006; Nettles performs with the band at the CMA Awards in November 2005.









Soul, a team in the Arena Football League, in 2004. He later teamed up with Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment and tried to buy the NFL's Buffalo Bills. Donald Trump also bid for the Bills, but both he and Jon eventually lost out.

Jon devotes a huge amount of time, energy and resources to support philanthropic causes, focusing specifically on housing and hunger. His Jon Bon Jovi Soul Foundation has funded affordable housing for those in need, and he runs two JBJ Soul Kitchens, which are nonprofit community restaurants where both paying and in-need customers are served. There are no prices on the menu, but a donation is suggested, and if you can't make a donation, you can volunteer.

The common denominator for all of Jon's business ventures is that he likes to identify opportunities, move fast and commit to achieving the highest level possible. One night, an interaction with his son Jesse spawned another new undertaking, Hampton Water. As Jesse explained to *wmagazine.com*: "I came up with the name—basically, if you've spent any time out here,

the running joke is that rosé is the water of the Hamptons. And so, you know, me and my buddies started calling every rosé 'Hampton water.' And one night, like two in the morning, I was sitting on the porch. And my dad came out; he's always been a big rosé drinker, and he calls it 'pink juice.' He goes, 'Do you want another glass of pink juice?' And I go, 'Dad, listen, you're in East Hampton, you're sitting at your beautiful beach house, you're not drinking pink juice, you're drinking Hampton water.' And he lit up. He was like, 'Oh my god, we might as well put that on a bottle. People would love it.'"

In April 2018, Jon and Jesse launched Hampton Water, and even before the official release, the initial run was sold out. That year it was also named *Wine Spectator's* best rosé and was No. 83 on the magazine's top 100 list.

Jon is proud of his success in business, but he doesn't think he necessarily has a magic touch or skills beyond good common sense. "Don't chase fads or fashions," he explained on CNBC. "Whatever it is that you're going to do, do it because you believe in it. And then success is just a matter of time."

At left, from top: Jon celebrates the Philadelphia Soul's win over the San Jose SaberCats at Arena Bowl XXII in 2008; Jon co-founded the Hampton Water Wine Company along with son Jesse Bongiovi (right) and Ali Thomas (left). Above: Hampton Water rosé.





**BON + JOVI**

# HALL OF FAME

Being inducted into  
the Rock & Roll  
Hall of Fame in  
2018 was a dream  
come true for  
Jon Bon Jovi—and  
long overdue.

Richie Sambora and Jon reunite for  
Bon Jovi's induction into the Rock &  
Roll Hall of Fame on April 14, 2018,  
in Cleveland.

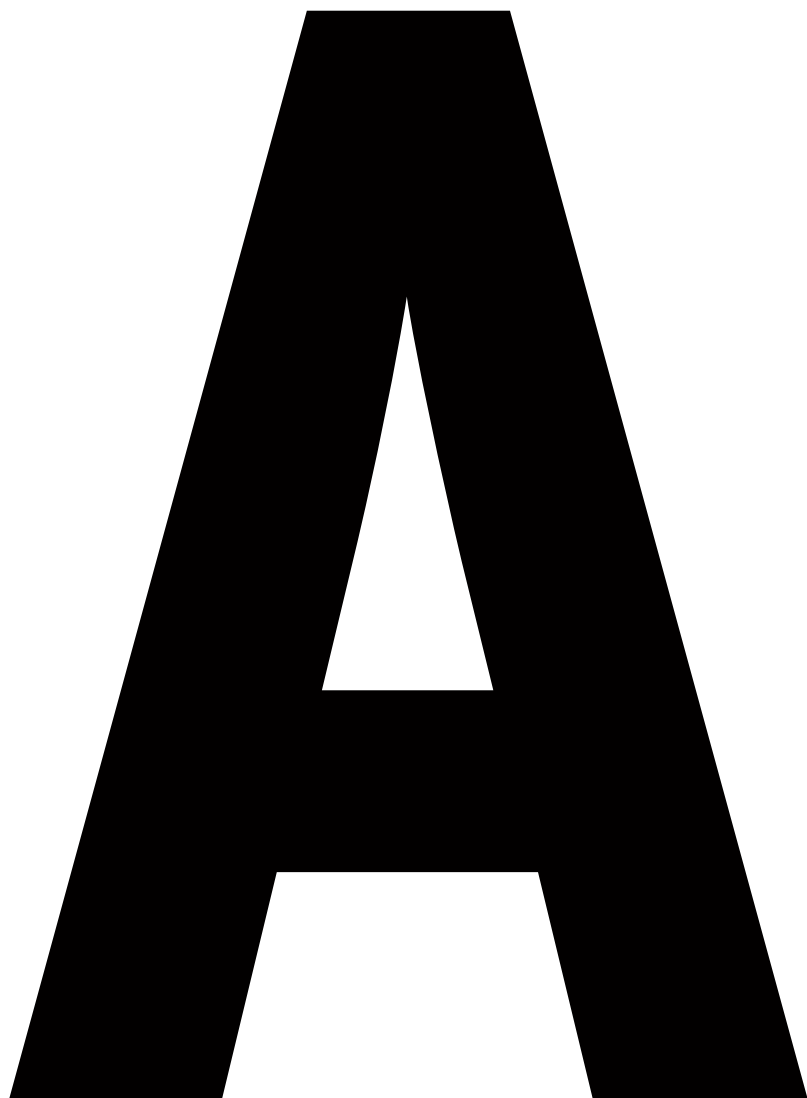












April 14, 2018, was a very special day for Jon Bon Jovi. It was the day a lifelong dream was fulfilled when he and his band were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Jon—and his fans—felt the honor was long overdue. By any metric, Bon Jovi is one of the most successful rock bands of all time. They have sold more than 130 million albums and performed over 2,700 concerts worldwide, leaving smiles almost as big as Jon’s on the faces of more than 34 million people. The band has also won one or more categories in every major music award from the American Music Awards to the MTV Video Music Awards to the Grammys.

Despite all those indisputable achievements, there are still critics who dismiss Bon Jovi—and especially Jon—as lucky. It’s always been that way, and it starts with Jon’s good looks.

When Jon first made the cover of *Rolling Stone* in 1987, he was ecstatic. But the excitement soon turned to disappointment when the story kept going on about his appearance, totally ignoring his music or the album that he believed truly marked his band’s arrival, *Slippery When Wet*. The cover line perfectly summed up what many thought Jon was all

about: “Hot Throb.”

Jon was deeply offended by the marginalization. As he later told *Interview* magazine, “I was very angry about all of that. But what could I do? Scar my face? Knock my teeth out? After a while, I learned if they’re going to say all I am is a pretty face, then they’re not taking the time to look at the facts, which speak for themselves.”

The facts that Jon was talking about—hit records, sold-out concerts—were all measurements of enormous popularity. But this was also the fuel that made Bon Jovi an easy target for naysayers.

At the peak of the band’s popularity, Bon Jovi was dangerously close to falling into the abyss due to overexposure. It had happened before in rock history—most notably in the the late 1970s when it was decided that “too much disco” meant the Bee Gees needed to go away and be rejected as uncool, no matter how many records they had sold.

By the early ’90s, when hair metal bands started falling out of favor, the very network that rode their success—MTV—took mean swipes at the entire genre on its hit cartoon show *Beavis and Butt-Head*. The brunt of the blows, which included snarky commentary over hair metal music videos, was absorbed by the band Winger. But Bon Jovi did not go unscathed, with Butt-Head speaking for a lot of people who grew tired of seeing the band do so well when he told Beavis: “If you say one more good thing about Bon Jovi, I’m gonna really smack the bejesus out of you.”

True to his Jersey roots, Jon was tough enough to take it. Then he counter-punched against his critics by growing, maturing and reinventing himself—in music and beyond—without ever abandoning the people who support him.

“[Bon Jovi has] been very smart about adapting to the times, but also adapting to the age of their fans,” author Bryan Reesman told *Forbes* magazine while promoting his book, *Bon Jovi: The Story*. “You probably listened to some of the metal I listened to growing up. A lot of those bands haven’t changed. Maybe it’s cool that there’s all these bands that are still doing it. But is it really the same being a 50-year-old guy writing raunchy rock and roll about doing drugs and getting laid? It doesn’t make sense. And yet, Jon can get away with doing things like that. ‘Bad Medicine’ feels like a raunchy song, but lyrically, it’s not that raunchy. You could still kind of relate to it as a 40-year-old.”

Being inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of



# "YOU SORT OF HAVE TO SAY THANK YOU ... SOMETIMES SOMEONE HAS TO GET OFF AN EXIT IN ORDER FOR YOU TO CONTINUE."

—Jon Bon Jovi

Fame was the ultimate validation for Jon and the band. They were finally given legitimacy and acknowledged as one of the all-time greatest acts in music history.

The Hall of Fame ceremony also brought about a cathartic moment for Jon. For the first time since his abrupt departure in 2013, Richie Sambora performed with Bon Jovi. The performance brought the band one step closer to closure, if not reconciliation. As Jon explained to *GQ*, "In a strange way my forgiveness for Richie allowed me to grow, and David to grow, and Tico to grow into who we are today. Because we were forced down a different road. You don't blame someone for that, you sort of have to say thank you, because it helps you continue your little journey. Sometimes someone has to get off an exit in order for you to continue."

Bon Jovi's *2020*, released in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, is a clear example of how Jon has changed as a songwriter and as a person. Older and wiser, Jon's no longer looking to create teen anthems like "You Give Love a Bad Name." He's embraced philanthropy and charitable causes, and hot-button contemporary social issues are at the forefront of his mind. "American Reckoning," for example, reflects on the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. "Lower the Flag" is based on the recent increase in gun violence and school shootings. "Blood in the Water" is about migrants and the challenges they face in their search for a better life. Jon also wrote a COVID-themed track

The Hall of Fame ceremony marked the first time Sambora had played with Bon Jovi since his sudden departure in 2013, bringing the band one step closer to closure.











called “Do What You Can.”

“Unbroken” began when Jon was asked to write a song about PTSD in soldiers for a documentary film called *To Be of Service*. Though his parents met in the Marines, it was a topic he was unfamiliar with, and he was initially torn about getting involved. But after deciding to meet the challenge, Jon did a deep dive into the subject. When he finished writing

**“HONESTLY, AT THIS POINT, WHAT I’M HOPING TO DO IS TO FIRST AND FOREMOST ENJOY IT, AND THEN KEEP INTEGRITY.”**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

the song, he presented an iPhone demo recording of himself singing it with an acoustic guitar to the film’s director, Josh Aronson. Jon immediately received Aronson’s approval. Then Jon sent the recording to the soldiers, and their reaction was, in Jon’s words, “everything I had hoped for. Because I wanted them to feel proud of the song.”

Positive moments of pride is a great way to sum up what Jon feels now, as he nears the age of 60. He’s aged gracefully. No cosmetic surgery, no Botox, no hair transplants and no dye jobs. “Let me tell you, I’ve earned this gray hair,” he told *USA Today* while promoting *2020*. “I’ve been through enough hurting and healing to be here.”

He has no plans to stop performing, writing songs or recording. With nothing left to prove, his motives are simple: “Honestly, at this point, what I’m hoping to do is to first and foremost enjoy it, and then keep integrity,” he told *USA Today*. “I don’t ever want to be on the ‘Where are they now?’ pile.”

As for the future, Jon Bon Jovi is not finished chasing his ever-evolving dreams. Having achieved success in music, entertainment, business and

Above: Jon presents Pink with the Icon Award at the 2021 Billboard Music Awards. At right from top: The band attends the MTV Europe Music Awards in 1995; Jon and Prince Harry meet with the Invictus Games Choir at London’s Abbey Road Studios in February













**"IT'S A GIFT THAT GOD GIVES YOU THE JOB YOU WANTED WHEN YOU WERE A KID, AND THAT I GET TO DO IT STILL. I'M THE LUCKIEST MAN IN THE WORLD."**

**—Jon Bon Jovi**

philanthropy, it's impossible to know where inspiration might lead him next.

"I'm not old enough to start thinking about mortality," he told *GQ*. "But the idea that we're not the kid in the room anymore—48, 58—you're sort of accomplishing or have accomplished the great things that you're gonna do, and that's all well and good, but what matters more is what you're building with your family. Because those two chapters, you can't f--k up either one of those or they're gonna scar you. Fix those circumstances and get them right now, [then] start writing your own chapters. Live with them. Make them something worth reading again."

When asked by *60 Minutes* Australia what chapter of the Jon Bon Jovi storybook he's currently at, Jon said: "I don't know, that's the beauty of it. We're just ... a little more than halfway there."

It's a perspective Jon wears well because it comes from a place of gratitude and contentment. He has never forgotten how the journey started, and how much work and sacrifice it took to reach the fortunate place where he is today—not only from him, but from all the people who have supported and loved him over the years. "It's a gift that God gives you the job you wanted when you were a kid, and that I get to do it still," he says. "I'm the luckiest man in the world."

Clockwise from top left: Grace Potter and Jon at the Love Rocks NYC benefit concert in June 2021; Jon and Dorothea accept the Humanitarian Award at the JRF 2020 Robie Awards dinner; Jon performs at a rally for then-presidential candidate Joe Biden (2).



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# JON BON JOVI

HOW A KID FROM NEW JERSEY BECAME A  
ROCK 'N' ROLL LEGEND



**“SUCCESS IS  
FALLING DOWN NINE TIMES  
AND GETTING UP TEN.”**

**– JON BON JOVI**

